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Bd. Oct. 1904.



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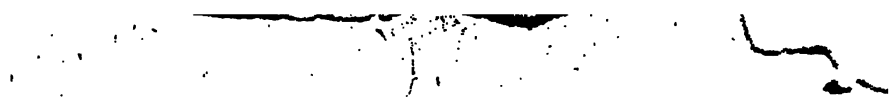
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THOMAS HILL, D.D.,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

THE GIFT OF HIS CHILDREN.

4 January, 1892.





IN MEMORIAM

H. L. A.

BOSTON:

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

1864.

IN MEMORIAM

Henry Livermore Abbott.

H. L. A.

OB. MAY VI., A. D. MDCCC LXIV.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis?

BOSTON:

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

1864.

4 January, 1892.

From the papers of
THOMAS H. HILL.

THE following appreciative and most kind account of the military life and services of Major Abbott, was written by a brother-officer of the Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, who knew the subject of it well, and was in the position and had the knowledge and experience to weigh his services, and to estimate them at their true value. It has been considered not unseemly by his family, that this account should be printed, for distribution among those to whom his memory will always be very dear. Nor will it be improper to add, to what has been told so well by his friend and brother-officer, a few other facts connected with his short life.

Major Abbott was the second son of J. G. and Caroline Abbott, and was born in Lowell, January 21, A. D. 1842. He was graduated at Harvard College in the Class of 1860. At the breaking out of the Rebellion, in April, 1861, he was studying law, having commenced the study immediately upon his graduation from college. At the time Major Abbott joined the Fourth Battalion of Infantry, his elder brother, Edward Gardner Abbott, raised a full company, of which he was appointed captain, and a younger brother, afterwards Captain Fletcher M. Abbott, second lieutenant, for the Second Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. The company was the first of that regiment

which went into camp. Both the eldest and youngest brother remained with the Second, sharing all its fortunes and hardships, till the battle of Cedar Mountain, August 9, 1862, when the eldest, then the first captain in the regiment, was killed. The youngest brother remained with his regiment until after the battle of the Antietam, when he received an appointment upon the staff of General William Dwight, and served through the campaign in Louisiana in the winter and spring of 1863, and also through the whole of the siege of Port Hudson till its surrender. He alone remains of the three brothers who entered the service at the same time.

The difference in age between Edward and Henry was less than sixteen months. They grew up together, were schoolmates, class- and room-mates at college, and companions after graduation in the same law office; they also entered the military service at the same time, and fell on fields not many miles apart, their deaths separated in time by less than twenty-one months. Their bodies were recovered, and lie side by side in their native city. Seldom have brothers been more united in their lives or loved each other more tenderly; each worthy of the other, and each the idol of all at home, they were not long separated in their deaths.

Boston, *June* 10, 1864.

HENRY LIVERMORE ABBOTT.

HENRY LIVERMORE ABBOTT, Major of the Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, fell, mortally wounded, in the Battle of the Wilderness, on Friday, May 6, 1864, at the age of twenty-two years.

It is common, in these troubled days, to read the announcement of the death of soldiers; but the blow seems heaviest when it strikes down those who are in the morning of life. Very many of the young men of gentlest nurture and brightest promise have gone, in the past three years, from their pleasant homes in Boston, and done good service in the field. There are some among them whose merit in their new profession has been so remarkable, that, when the dark hand is laid upon any one of them, we may

pause, even in the midst of the excitement of such a period as that through which we are passing, to contemplate his virtues, and to express our admiration of the noble development to which the discipline of the war has led.

It is the fortune of war that its laurels are gathered for the most part by general officers. This is more sure to be the case in proportion as the armies on foot are larger. In our immense armies, regimental officers of the infantry volunteer service have little chance of becoming widely known. No brevets are granted to them, and promotion among them takes place according to seniority. Junior officers of the engineer corps and the artillery are often raised to the rank of general at a single step, but the most meritorious officers of the volunteer infantry must usually rise, slowly and painfully, to the rank of colonel, before they can hope for an opportunity of extending their usefulness and their reputation by able management of something more than a regimental command.

It is a striking illustration of the truth of this

rule, that Major Abbott, after nearly three years of the hardest service, in all of which he had displayed almost unequalled excellence as an officer, and the most brilliant bravery in the field, had risen no higher when he fell. He had been in so many pitched battles, and it so often chanced that he found himself in the very centre of the central struggle, that it is safe to say that there are few soldiers living, of whatever rank, who have seen more or harder fighting than he. Always equal, and more than equal, to his position, he rose steadily, and his comrades rejoiced at every promotion he received; but it is a long way from a second lieutenancy to the command of a regiment, and, in such a regiment as his, few vacancies occur except from death or disabling wounds.

In the spring of 1861, he joined the Fourth Battalion of Infantry, M. V. M., as a private, and served with it, for one month, at Fort Independence, Boston Harbor. In July of the same year, he was commissioned as second lieutenant, upon the recommendation of Captain Bartlett, and at-

tached to his company of the Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. While the regiment was in camp at Readville, Massachusetts, his rapid progress in learning his duties, and his extreme assiduity in performing them, attracted the most favorable notice of his superior officers. It was observed particularly that he was patient and untiring in his efforts to impress upon his men a sense of the importance and dignity of the duties of sentinels. From the commencement to the close of his military career, his high estimate of this honorable function of the soldier was one of his distinguishing characteristics.

He went with his regiment to the field in September, 1861, and on the march and in camp did faithfully all that fell to him to do. He was present at the Battle of Ball's Bluff, and bore himself manfully all through that trying day. He was one of the five officers who assisted Captain Bartlett in the difficult and dangerous exploit, of causing a crazy boat to make sixteen trips across the Potomac, and thereby saving eighty men from captivity.

His regiment suffered heavily in officers in the affair of Ball's Bluff, and some inefficient officers, who ranked him, sent in their resignations at about the same time. It thus happened that the young second lieutenant came into command of his company before he had been many weeks in the field; and, by a singular chain of circumstances, he was never transferred from it, and continued to command it till he became major of the regiment.

In camp at Poolesville, Maryland, where his regiment passed the winter of 1861-2, Lieutenant Abbott was distinguished for regularity and precision in the discharge of his duties, for attentive care of his men, and for promptness and accuracy in every matter of battalion drill. He had great fondness for the study of tactics, and natural aptness for it, and he rapidly became a more perfect master of the school of the battalion than is often met with.

He was one of the very few officers of the Twentieth who did not apply for leave to go home in the first winter of the war. He was

with his regiment in the Valley of the Shenandoah in March, 1862, and went with it to the Peninsula at the beginning of the following month. He bore his share of the fatigues and exposures of the siege of Yorktown, and always had his company in the best condition, and held it ready for duty at the shortest notice. On one occasion, when his regiment was engaged in supporting an engineer reconnoissance before the enemy's "One Gun Battery," he displayed a gallantry and a control of his men which will long live in the memory of those who were looking on.

He was present with his regiment at the battle of West Point, where the command was not actively engaged. On the 31st of May, when the lamented Sedgwick met and crushed, with ten regiments of his division, the left of the enemy, as it swung round the beaten left wing of our army at Fair Oaks, Lieutenant Abbott commanded and fought his company with the brilliant bravery which was always afterwards his acknowledged characteristic. He shared with

his men the fatigues and anxieties, the hard marching and hard fighting of the Seven Days, and at Glendale, on the 30th of June, while cheering and directing his men, with voice and gesture, in a peculiarly exposed and trying position, he was shot through the arm which held his outstretched sword. But his wound did not dispose him to leave the field. He continued to command his company till the end of that sharp action, and commanded it again the next day, at Malvern Hill. When our weary army reached the James River, he went home, by direction of the surgeons, but he came back to his post before his wound was fairly healed. His absence was felt by officers and men in a way which showed their deep sense of his worth. The march across the Peninsula was a peculiar episode of the war. It brought officers and men very closely together. Fatigue and anxiety pressed heavily upon both body and mind, and the strain was such that those who bore it well, and as Lieutenant Abbott bore it, were recognized as of the truest temper.

Lieutenant Abbott marched with the army down the Peninsula, and was with his brigade at the battle of Chantilly, and while it covered, last of all the infantry, the retreat of Pope.

In the Maryland campaign, he was seized with typhoid fever, and obliged to quit the field for a while. He soon returned to his regiment, and was with it on the 11th of December, 1862, when it cleared the main street of Fredericksburg. The Twentieth was most conspicuous that day, as it was the only regiment engaged in the street fight. It crossed the river in boats, and formed under the bank of the further shore. Then it advanced, in column by company, up the main street leading from the river. Captain Abbott led the column, with his large company of sixty men divided into platoons. The fire of the unseen enemy was extremely hot, and the men fell fast. Captain Abbott displayed the noblest courage on this worst of days. He fought his company till night ended the carnage. He lost thirty-five of his sixty men in this affair, which only lasted two hours and a half. The

strain was as hard as troops can have to bear, because they could not see their enemy, and because the regiments ordered to support their advance, by moving up on the right and left, could not be made to go forward, and the Twentieth advanced alone, and fell in heaps under a fire that came from every house, from garret to cellar, upon their front and both their flanks. The officer commanding the brigade, in his official report of this day, after stating that he ordered the Twentieth to clear the street at all hazards, used the following language: "I cannot presume to express all that is due to officers and men of the Twentieth regiment for the unflinching bravery and splendid discipline shown in the execution of this order. Platoon after platoon was swept away, but the head of the column did not falter. Ninety-seven officers and men were killed and wounded in the space of about fifty yards."

In the great attack of December 13th, the Twentieth had the extreme right of our line, and advanced on the enemy's works under an


enfilading fire of artillery, till it approached the rifle-pits, when a withering fire of musketry was opened upon it. The conduct of the regiment, in this exposed position, was so admirable that it received strong commendation in the official report,—commendation the more noteworthy, as it contrasted their steadiness with the wavering and ultimate retreat of neighboring regiments, which were unable to bear the tremendous fire to which they were subjected. Captain Abbott, in this attack, was in command on the extreme right, and he and the regiment met with a heavy loss, for his valued lieutenant, Alley, was shot dead. Sixty men fell in this attack, making one hundred and fifty-seven of the three hundred and seven which the regiment numbered when it crossed the river.

When General Hooker commenced the movement which led to the battle of Chancellorsville, in May, 1863, General Sedgwick crossed his command, the Sixth Corps, with the second division of the Second Corps, below Fredericksburg. Thus the Twentieth, which belonged to the second

division, came once more under the orders of the gallant soldier who commanded that division all through the Peninsular campaign and at the Antietam. Captain Abbott was with his regiment in all the movements made by General Sedgwick, and marched with it through the streets of Fredericksburg, passing the graves of the many gallant soldiers of his company who fell there in the previous December. He saw the storming of St. Marye's Heights, and was with his brigade all the long 4th of May, when that brigade, deployed as skirmishers and covering a front of nearly five miles, alone held the city of Fredericksburg, and held it till the following morning, when it recrossed the river.

In the forced marches which preceded the battle of Gettysburg, Captain Abbott displayed the greatest efficiency in checking the evil of straggling. It was largely owing to his exertions that his regiment arrived on the field without the loss of a single man. In the bitter fighting which followed, he was of the faithful few who first checked and finally repulsed the fierce on-

slaught of Pickett's division of Longstreet's Corps. The artillery of the enemy was massed in front of the Second Corps, and the concentrated fire of more than one hundred guns was poured upon it for two hours. Then came the majestic advance of their infantry. Regardless of the gaps made in their ranks by the fire of our artillery, they moved steadily forward. The fire of our infantry was reserved till the faces of the enemy could be distinctly seen. Then Lieut. Colonel Macy, commanding the Twentieth, opened a fire which was so rapid and well-directed that the enemy in front of the Twentieth broke and scattered. They rallied to the right of the position of the Twentieth, and there the collected masses, looking like an acre of men, made a desperate rush, and effected a partial lodgment in the line. Then came the very tug of war. Troops from the right and left, the Twentieth among the latter, hurried to the spot, and formed a half circle round the gap into which the enemy was pushing. The colors of the Northern regiments and the battle-flags of the Southern troops waved thickly



in this valley of death. Northern and Southern soldiers fought gallantly and fell thickly here, and the victory was with us. Few of the Southern troops who charged our lines got safely back. Of those who were not killed, the majority threw down their arms, hopeless of retreating safely under our fire.

The close of this action found Captain Abbott in command of his regiment, with two officers only to assist him. The gallant Colonel Revere had received his death-wound the day before, Lieut. Colonel Macy lost a hand, and of the ten officers and two hundred and eighteen men who went into action, three officers and one hundred and sixteen men remained unhurt. Besides the colonel, seven officers and one hundred and one men were killed and wounded.

When the army of the Potomac fell back to the neighborhood of Warrenton, in October, 1862, the Second Corps formed the rear-guard, and did much marching and some fighting. Major Abbott was at that time in command of the Twentieth. As the second division, to which the

Twentieth has been attached from the beginning of its history, approached Bristoe Station, on the 14th of October, the enemy, in line of battle, were seen sweeping down upon the flank of the marching column. They were extremely near, and the movement was so sudden and unexpected, that the position was critical in the extreme. But the troops preserved their presence of mind, and promptly threw themselves behind the railroad embankment, parallel to which they had been marching. The advance of the enemy was magnificent, but their repulse was terrible. Major Abbott reserved his fire till the enemy was within a few paces, and then delivered a fire that crushed the enemy in his front. The regiments on his right and left were equally successful. The enemy, who belonged to the corps of A. P. Hill, fell back, leaving their dead and wounded on the ground, and our men, following them up, secured five guns and brought them off. Two of them, and the first that were taken, were secured by a company of Major Abbott's command.

Major Abbott was present with his regiment.

at Mine Run, at the close of November in the same year. His regiment, deployed as skirmishers, and covering the front of the whole division, there drove in the enemy's skirmish line so rapidly that they did not stop to reload after their first fire. The following morning, his regiment took its place in the great storming column. The work before them was known to be awful. For eight hours they bore the terrible suspense of expectation, to the suffering of which every soldier knows that actual battle brings unspeakable relief, and then learned that the attempt would not be made.

At the battle of the Wilderness, on the 6th of May, 1864, his regiment was taken into action by its colonel. The division was sent forward, at about 7 A. M., to support General Birney, who was then pressed hard by Longstreet. Major Abbott was second in command, and rode on the flank of his battalion with a cheerful look. It was remarked of him at the moment, that he rode into the fight with a smile on his face. The battle raged very fiercely, and the close trees

turned white as the streams of bullets stripped them of their bark. Colonel Macy fell, and was carried to the rear. The command devolved upon Major Abbott, who was still unhurt. An advance was ordered, and he was gallantly leading on his faithful veterans, when a bullet struck him down, and he was borne to the rear, mortally wounded. He survived for a few hours. His devotion to his men was shown, in his last suffering moments, by a direction that all the money he left should be used for the relief of widows and orphans of soldiers of his regiment.

It is shown by this brief record that Major Abbott had been present at almost every one of the considerable battles of the Army of the Potomac.

Clasps and medals cover the breasts of many European soldiers who have never approached the merit of his services. Many European generals die in their beds at a good old age, who have never had a fraction of his experience of marching and fighting. Military service is to be estimated, not by rank or length of years, but

by the extent and variety of dangers bravely faced and the amount of good done. Judged by this standard, Major Abbott deserves a very high place among the heroes of the war. At an age when most men are completing their education, or serving their apprenticeship to their future calling, the young veteran was wisely forming and bravely leading soldiers. That his rank was no higher when he fell, was owing only to his youth, and to his humble grade on entering the service, but it is safe to say that there are more than half our generals whom our country and our army could better afford to lose than this almost peerless officer. He had been in so many bloody battles, and so often stood unharmed, hour after hour, in the midst of his brave men as they fell in heaps, that it seemed as if there were really ground for hoping that he was reserved for the happy lot of rendering his country the same great services on a large scale, that he had long been rendering on a comparatively small one.

His company was always the pride of the regiment. The brave and intelligent men who

composed it, commanded at first by the brilliant soldier whom our people now admire as Brigadier-General Bartlett, with Colonel Macy and Major Abbott as his lieutenants, have constantly borne the highest reputation, and rendered the most gallant and efficient service. They have given to the regiment from their ranks the lamented Alley, and four excellent officers besides. The soldiers have been worthy of their officers, and the officers have been worthy of their men.

Major Abbott was long in command of his regiment, at different times, and the high tone which he inculcated, the discipline he maintained, and the instruction he imparted, combined with its gallantry in action, of which he offered so bright an example, to give it the reputation of being unsurpassed in the Army of the Potomac. His merit was appreciated wherever he was known, and his reputation was spreading in the army. He was recognized throughout his Corps as a model commander, and that Corps was the sturdy Second, which has been reported to be the only Corps in the

army which never has lost a gun or a color. General Sedgwick, who knew him well, declared with emphasis that he was "a wonderfully good soldier;" and his division commander, General Gibbon, pronounced his military services and ability to be of the highest order. The knowledge of his extraordinary merit had even reached General Meade, under whose immediate command he had never served, and when he heard of his death, he turned to General Grant, and spoke of him in strong terms of praise and of regret.

From the beginning of the war to his death, Major Abbott was a diligent student of his profession. His mind was well adapted for grasping and for retaining its principles and its details. He made himself thoroughly familiar with the school of the soldier, of the company, and of the battalion, and with the Army Regulations and the Articles of War. He informed himself, by methodical reading, of the military systems of other nations, and was constantly adding to his knowledge of the great campaigns of history, especially of those of Napoleon. He took especial delight


in tactics. He loved to think about movements, and to talk about them, and found great pleasure in discussing difficult questions, and in seeking to discover the simplest and most rapid methods of putting troops into every position which the chances of war might make desirable. He saw troops more clearly with his mind's eye than most men with the eye of the flesh, and he manoeuvred them rapidly and accurately in fancy. His perfect familiarity with all such matters gave him a singular command of his men. It was his habit to form his line in places where there seemed hardly more than room for the men to stand, and then to drill them in battalion movements, with such ingenuity and precision and nice calculation of distance, that men collected from all the neighboring camps to look on and wonder. He would also sometimes draw up his battalion as a brigade, and drill it skilfully in evolutions of the line. He devised some very rapid and beautiful movements, executed by breaking ranks and re-forming on the colors. He taught his men to perform these movements so perfectly, that at a

recent review of the Second Corps, in presence of General Hancock, General Meade, and General Grant, he won great applause by causing his regiment to break from the line, change front in any direction at a run, and to form square from line at a run, and commence firing from every front as fast as each man took his place. These movements were not mere embroideries,—pleasing at parade, useless under fire. Besides the general advantage of teaching officers and men to be rapid, ready, and precise in every movement, they had the particular and practical advantage of being serviceable in action. Probably none but a steady and highly-disciplined regiment could be trusted with the execution of such movements under fire; but in the surging, swaying battle of the Wilderness, where flanks were constantly exposed and turned, the Twentieth repeatedly changed front by breaking ranks and re-forming at a run on the colors. They thus had the triple advantage of rapidity, of exposing no company flank, and no rear of a marching company, to the enemy.

Major Abbott was the strictest of disciplinarians. His care of his men, his regularity in the discharge of his duty, and his justice, were so well understood that he seldom had occasion to be severe; but his men knew perfectly well that he never hesitated to be severe if the occasion called for severity. He compelled his men to exercise the most scrupulous cleanliness, not only in their arms, equipments, and uniforms, but in their persons. He was careful of their health in every way. He never grew careless about routine matters, as so many good officers do. He was always prompt at his roll-calls, regular and thorough in his inspections. The rifles of his men were kept in a condition that would appear incredible in description. His early regard to the duties of sentinels never left him. In his last camp, near Brandy Station, when the third year of the war was nearing its end, he was as attentive to this matter as if his men had everything to learn. It was his daily habit to closely supervise the inspection of his camp guard, and to catechise the whole guard in their duties, before they marched on.

His strict discipline, his perfect familiarity with his duties, and his conspicuous gallantry, made his men respect and prize him. His readiness to share all their privations and exposures and fatigues, his watchful care over them, his gentleness and cheeriness as he moved among them when off duty, his sympathetic letters to the families of those who suffered, filled them with the truest and best affection that soldiers can feel for their officers. He never gave his men any unnecessary work, never *worried* them in any way. He was never nervous, never gloomy, and never permitted any gloomy talk about him. His men "thought everything of him," and well they might. The hardships of a soldier's life are almost immeasurably lightened to those who serve under such an officer. An army officered by such men would be irresistible. What bound can we set to our regret and mourning for such a man?

Major Abbott's character was one of singular maturity and completeness. He was as free from petty vices as he was conspicuous for capacity and fearlessness. The forced inaction




and monotony of winter quarters and hot summer camps, never tempted him to dissipation in any form. He did everything in his power to put a stop to profanity and card-playing among his men. He set the example of every virtue he strove to inculcate. It is hardly necessary to add that the intemperate always felt the weight of his heaviest displeasure, for, next to cowardice, nothing is so destructive to the soldier as intemperance. He won the love of his brother-officers as completely as he did the devotion of his men. Their affection and their admiration went hand in hand. He was always helpful, always ready to relieve any comrade of whatever work might press too heavily upon him. The effervescence of youth had quite departed from him, and left in its place the clear spirit of a generous, mature, and vigorous manhood.

He had more *esprit du corps* than is almost ever found in our army. He was perfectly devoted to his regiment always; to his company while he was a company officer. He declined promotion at first, rather than be transferred

from his company, and he never left it till he rose to the rank of a field officer. No temptation could induce him to leave his regiment to perform the easier and safer and more agreeable duties of the staff. It was wonderful to see the effects of his influence in giving high tone to the men who rose from the ranks to be officers. His example was copied, his instructions were heeded, and a band of gallant, true, accomplished officers was formed around him, to take the places of the many who had gone beyond the shining river, and to sustain and extend the reputation of his steady regiment.

The announcement of the death of a major of a Massachusetts regiment, at the age of twenty-two years, gives little idea of the loss we have sustained. "*Sans peur et sans reproche*" was engraved upon the plate on his coffin-lid. Brave as Bayard, generous as Sidney, the young veteran has gone to his rest. All the hopes of his young life, all the bright possibilities of his future, must remain unfulfilled and unattained. His country has lost one of its most faithful champions, his



State one of its most worthy sons, his companions-in-arms an associate beyond praise.

The bells beyond the river keep ringing to summon the gallant souls of heroes to the pleasant fields. Seventeen worthy officers of the Twentieth have already obeyed the summons, and scores of trusty sergeants and brave privates have passed out of the smoke of battle and crossed with them. When the drum beats for the roll-calls of the Twentieth, a worn remnant only answer to their names. The officer who has been most constantly with the regiment, and to whose influence its excellence is chiefly owing, is no longer with them. But his example remains, to nerve and stimulate the stout hearts that used to beat lovingly, and now beat sadly for him. When the day comes for Peace to sit once more under her olive, when the southern husbandman, turning up the earth with the ploughshare, finds weapons rough with rust and wonders at exhumed bones,

“ When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flags
are furled,”

and our western sun shines once more upon a prosperous and united Nation, the memory of the horrors of to-day may pass from our minds and hearts. The forgetting of ills is one of the most blessed attributes of our nature. The grass will soon be green over the grave of our departed friend and comrade, but so long as one true soldier of the Twentieth shall preserve his recollection of anything, so long will there be at least one heart in which the memory of the young veteran will be cherished. So long as the American people shall rejoice in the blessings which this war is waged to secure, so long will their best gratitude be due to those who have been as faithful and efficient in their service as Major Abbott.







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